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CARDIGANSHIRE POLITICS IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

A STUDY OF THE ELECTIONS OF 1865 AND 1868¹

I TRUST that I shall not be considered immodest if I devote the time you have placed at my disposal to a further discussion of some of the more puzzling features of the two elections which I have already described, in part, in a recent Cymmrodorion lecture.² I refer to the elections of 1865 and 1868, elections which, though separated by three years, exhibit so many features in common that they deserve to be regarded by the student of politics as twin manifestations of the same general changes in the political life of the county, and of Wales as a whole. They require to be studied within such a wider context not merely because they would, in themselves, be unintelligible except in such a relation, but also because the emergence of what can be called a 'national' view of Welsh politics, with a consequent breakdown of the ancient particularism of the counties, is the feature of politics in the 1860's which most insistently demands our concentrated attention. If one asked what, from the point of view of Welsh politicians of the time, was the feature most to be deplored or commended (depending on the point of view held) in the nature of politics at that time, the answer would surely be this, the intrusion into the counties of political ideologies and techniques which claimed a kind of national validity and scope, and which perforce challenged the traditional values and parochial arrangements of the old political classes in those ancient societies. It was the conflict between two differing cultural views—between the politics of deference, the remote exercise of the prerogatives of leadership based in a society expressive of degree and station, on the one hand, and the politics of numbers, of *vox populi, vox Dei*, on the other, which gave to the reform movement of the middle sixties its peculiar tensions and, often, bitterness. These tensions are present almost wherever we look in Welsh politics at that time. But not everywhere equally, for there was nothing cataclysmic in the changes we have to observe, and everywhere they were determined and shaped by the balance or interaction of social forces. Looking at the elections of those years over the country as a whole, we can readily see that, with the possible exception of Merthyr Tydfil, the victories of the new over the old were partial only, the outcome determined by the extent of the changes in the basic social configurations of the localities. Only where the growth of industry, and its concomitants, the creation of new types of communities and new leadership patterns, had changed the fundamental social relationships was the victory complete. Such were

Merthyr and Denbighshire, and in these three constituencies (particularly the Merthyr Tydfil and the Denbigh boroughs seats) the return of Henry Richard and Watkin Williams and Osborne Morgan should be regarded less as victories, of battles fought and won, than as the recognition of established facts, the bringing into a state of congruence the underlying social realities and the political arrangements appropriate and corresponding to them.

But if, on this view, Merthyr Tydfil and Denbigh boroughs exhibit the victorious recognition of facts, how are we to explain the changes in Cardiganshire? In this paper I shall argue that the elections themselves, and, therefore, the underlying social changes, marked a transitional stage in the development of the new kind of politics. To adopt the metaphor of a Cardiganshire man before the Land Commission of 1893, it was the cracking of the ice; no more than that, but carrying with it the promise that in due time, and ineluctably, the waters would flow unimpeded along their destined course.

The *locus classicus* for the election of 1865 in Cardiganshire is, and always has been, the account written some three years afterwards by the Reverend James Rhys Jones (Kilsby).³ As a piece of journalism it is first-rate; far superior, one would judge, in point of style and presentation, in vivid immediateness and understanding of contemporary modes of political action to the pompous, inflated semi-translations of English reviews which masqueraded from time to time in *Y Traethodydd* as political commentaries. Kilsby's account is regarded as authoritative, and it is worthy of consideration because, like the Apostle John, he describes what he had seen and heard. Kilsby had himself taken a leading role in the electioneering, having attached himself almost from the beginning to the bandwagon of David Davies, lending not only his authority as a Calvinistic Methodist minister but also his notoriety as a popular and out-spoken lecturer to that unusual candidate. Moreover, Kilsby was the close confidant of some of Cardiganshire's leading Nonconformist Liberals. In addition to John Matthews, a prosperous grocer of Princess Street, Aberystwyth, he was on terms of intimate friendship with John Jones ('Ivon'), another grocer and Methodist deacon.⁴ 'Ivon' was prominent among the leading figures in that small coterie of intellectuals, mainly commercial men, shopkeepers, craftsmen, and apprentices, who had made of Aberystwyth something of a cultural centre before the coming of the University College.⁵ Kilsby and 'Ivon' had corresponded for many years, sharing not only a passion for the poetry of Williams Pantycelyn, but also a preoccupation with, and a concern for, the political representation of Wales and of Cardiganshire in particular.⁶ Kilsby was thus in a

position to have access to information not otherwise available, and it is clear from his article that he wrote from inside.

To accept his account of what happened in 1865, however, would be naïve in the extreme. However intimate his knowledge of events, it was partial, and despite his avowed objectivity—his determination ‘to write without vitriol, vinegar, or wormwood’ (ingredients rarely absent from his most temperate and appetizing brews)—his sympathies were engaged all on one side, and his purpose was a polemical one. It is his assumptions, his ironies, which give the game away, and we can learn a great deal about the deeper layers in the election and about Cardiganshire politics if we examine these.

The course of events is set out clearly enough in Kilsby’s article. It had been understood for some twelve months in county political circles that the Tory member for the county, W. T. R. Powell, of Nanteos, who had been returned in 1859, would not again contest the seat.⁷ He had suffered ill-health for some time, and had let it be known that he wished to retire. The Liberals, who had contested the seat in 1859—if, indeed, ‘contested’ is the word, since there had been no Liberal association in existence—and whose organization was thought to have improved in the meantime, had looked towards the house of Bronwydd for deliverance, and it was understood that Sir Thomas Davies Lloyd would contest the seat against any Tory on Powell’s retirement. In fact, a few weeks before the dissolution, Powell declared that, his health having improved, he would again offer himself, whereupon Lloyd of Bronwydd promptly published a letter in the local papers stating that under no circumstances would he contest the seat against the sitting member. This caused consternation in the Liberal ranks, but scarcely as much as was caused by the almost simultaneous appearance in the county of two men who were prepared to do so, namely, Henry Richard and David Davies. Appearing out of the blue—or rather, out of the hills of Cardiganshire and the smoke of London—Cardiganshire Liberals now had to decide on which candidate to accept. A meeting between these two and their retainers was arranged to take place at Aberaeron on Thursday, 6 July, but a few hours before this confrontation Powell announced his retirement and, as a consequence, Lloyd his renewed candidature. Thereupon, and before the nomination meeting had taken place, Henry Richard withdrew, giving as his reason for so doing a desire not to split the Liberal vote, the Conservatives having failed to find a candidate of their own. David Davies, however, refused to do likewise, announced his candidature, and proceeded to fight the election. In the event, he was defeated, Lloyd being returned with a majority of 361 in a total poll of 2,659 votes.⁸

Why did Lloyd win? Kilsby and Davies, representing, as they would

argue, the Nonconformist Liberal party in the county, had a simple answer to this question which it was the purpose of Davies's farewell Address to the voters and Kilsby's *Traethodydd* article, as well as numerous comments in the national journals, to propagate. This was, first, that Lloyd would not have been returned without the realities of gentry power to aid him, and second, that the Nonconformists of the county had failed to unite behind Davies.⁹ The first of these reasons is, of course, polemical, but like all good polemics it has some regard for the truth, if not for the whole truth. It might, for instance, be significant that Lloyd had his majorities in four of the six polling districts—in Cardigan, Aberaeron, Llandysul, and Aberystwyth—and of these, three were in the south of the county where his influence, since there was no Conservative standing, was great, if not predominant. His majority at Aberystwyth, as Davies so often pointed out, was due to the influence of the house of Gogerddan which was implacably opposed to him. David Davies, for his part, did best at Tregaron and Lampeter, districts through which his railways were to run, and which were therefore likely to benefit immediately from his investments. One wonders how the Cardigan district would have voted if Davies's plan to open up the Cardigan coast had included a railway linking Cardigan to Lampeter along the Vale of Aeron.¹⁰ But to argue that this factor of gentry coercion—or, for that matter, the blandishments of capitalist investments—was the *sole* reason for the result of the election, or even that it was exercised in the ways described by the Nonconformist publicists, few of whom were actually resident in the county, was to over-simplify the situation, and to ignore social factors of great importance. This explanation makes assumptions which we must examine. Similarly, the second reason concerning the failure of the Nonconformists to act in the ways expected of them makes assumptions about the nature of Nonconformity in the county which need to be questioned. Kilsby and Henry Richard alike deplored their obvious failure to vote Liberal Nonconformist. But why did they not do so? Was it realistic, in social terms, to expect them to do so? To these two questions I now turn.

The political representation of Cardiganshire in the nineteenth century—and this is a truism—reflected the social configuration of the county. In this, there are two main features which need to be examined; first, the pattern of landownership, and second, the existence of the towns. So far as landownership was concerned the basic pattern was extremely simple. If we accept the analysis in John Bateman's *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*,¹¹ which was based primarily on the information contained in *The Return of Owners of Land*, 1873, or the *Domesday* as it was called,¹² we find that the structure was

pyramidic with a tendency for the outline to bulge a little above the medial line of substantial squires. There was only one peer, and he owned 42,890 acres with an income (according to the *Domesday*) of £10,579 *per annum*. This was the Earl of Lisburne, and his estates, though not the largest in the county, were commensurate with and probably sufficient to maintain his port and station as the premier landowner in the county.¹³ Below the Lisburnes in rank came a group of great landowners, four in number, who were commoners owning at least 3,000 acres with a rental of at least £3,000. At the head of these was the Pryse family of Gogerddan with estates totalling 26,684 acres and an income of £10,634, the lands covering much of the northern part of the county and bordering on those of Trawscoed. The Powell family of Nanteos owned 21,933 acres with an income of £9,024, the estates being rather more scattered, extending from the north of the county towards Tregaron in the south-east, which borough had traditionally been included in the Nanteos fief. J. B. Harford, of Falcondale, in the Lampeter region, had an estate of 5,782 acres and an income of £4,256 *per annum*, and the Alban Gwynne family of Monachty, near Aberaeron, 3,794 acres with an income of £3,678 *per annum*.

A feature of the above analysis is that these five landowners held between them roughly one-third of the total acreage of the county (excluding waste), and that three of them—Lisburne, Pryse, and Powell—held by far the greater part of this.¹⁴ These men were, therefore, heads of the county's premier families. The nature as well as the extent of their estates needs to be understood if their social standing and political power as a governing group are to be appreciated. The estates of the topmost three were all in the upland region extending like a crescent from the north to the south and south-east, and including the lead-bearing hills as well as the relatively good agricultural valleys. The Harford and Gwynne estates were somewhat different in character, depending less on mineral deposits, and typical, therefore, of the profitable estate-farming of lowland mixed agricultural economics—much nearer to the £1 an acre annual value to which landlords of this type aspired. The houses of these gentry—centres of estate management—reflected their status in society, and, if we may judge by the amount of rebuilding, their aspiring ambitions as well. The old ancestral homes had either long since been demolished and rebuilt or, as at Trawscoed, incorporated into more magnificent buildings set in parkland and surrounded by walls to keep in the game and keep out the lower orders.

Below these was a much larger group of squires, families with estates of from 1,000 to 3,000 acres, or quite often very much more, but whose

rentals did not exceed £3,000 *per annum*. According to Bateman, there were forty-eight of these in Cardiganshire in 1885 owning an aggregate of just over 81,000 acres. The *Domesday* of 1873 shows there to have been six squires with incomes ranging from £2,000 to £3,000 *per annum*, and twenty with incomes ranging from £1,000 to £2,000. This first group contained many ancient large estates, as those of Abermaid (6,891 acres), Allt-yr-odyn (5,416 acres), Betws Bledrws (4,782 acres), and Llanaeron (4,397 acres). These were in the southern part of the county for the most part, in the coastal region, or eastwards towards Lampeter, areas of mixed farming. Similarly, there were some very extensive estates and famous names among the group of twenty with incomes from land of up to £2,000 *per annum*. Llidiart, Highmead, Hafod, Mabws, Bronwydd, Glanrheidol, Alltlwyd, Llanfair, Llanina, for example, come within this group, many of the owners being of ancient lineage, their estates having borne the same family name for many generations. Below these again was a slightly smaller group of eighteen with incomes ranging from £500 to £1,000 *per annum*. Again, many of these were very old—Neuadd, Tyglyn, Pigeonsford, Tyllwyd—but their owners scarcely ranked high in the social hierarchy, yet it is still the class from among whom J.P.'s were chosen, containing army men, landed clerics, and the like, above the yeoman or substantial farmer, sometimes pricked for the shrievalty, occasionally producing a deputy lieutenant.

Thus, a total of forty-five families in these groups owned another third of the total available acreage.¹⁵ The rest of the land—excluding that owned by corporations—was held, for the most part, by farmers pure and simple, and small-holders. There were about 1,500 holding up to 100 acres, another 300 odd farms of 100 to 500 acres, and of these rather more than 1,500 had incomes from land of under £50 *per annum*. This is the class which appears in the census returns as 'farmer employing one or two servants', or 'small-holder', the ones at the very bottom of the land-owning class, the least prosperous of them, no doubt, supplementing their livelihoods as agricultural or mining labourers.

I should be the last to pretend that this is a sufficient analysis of county society, but it does serve to show that this landed society was dominated, in terms of wealth, by a very few families. It needs scarcely to be said that they exercised a social power commensurate with it. I should estimate that about fifty families in all were of any consequence in the political structure of the county—that is to say, supplying the office of justice of the peace, of sheriff and lieutenancy, chairing the quarter sessions, the boards of guardians of the poor, and so on.¹⁶ But within this larger group was a very small group, whom we may term

the governing families, whose leadership, however it might be contested and resented, was, nevertheless, paramount. In particular it was this group which supplied the office of lord lieutenant, the *custos rotulorum*, and, above all, which provided the parliamentary families. From the eighteenth century onwards Lisburne had contested Pryse, and an uneasy balance of forces between these two houses (and the intricate network of families related to them) had resulted. Pryse, Powell, Lisburne—these are the dominant names because these are the county proprietors. Only John Lloyd Davies of Allt-yr-odyn breaks the pattern, and he, having climbed meteorically to wealth *via* the law, and having been doubly successful in his marriages, had been accepted in county society, and represented the boroughs for one parliament (1855—57) as a Tory.¹⁷

The other aspect of Cardiganshire pertinent to our investigation is the existence of the towns. They have never been looked at closely, their growth studied, the nature of their integration into the county as a whole ascertained, and, above all, their populations analysed on the basis of occupation, wealth, and religious and political affiliations.¹⁸ The first thing that strikes one about these towns is the pre-eminence of two, Cardigan and Aberystwyth. These were, and had been, the county towns, with Cardigan claiming a statutory right to superiority which Aberystwyth, due to its increasing share in the wealth of the county, which the railway was immeasurably to enhance, was successfully disputing. In addition to these, there were the ancient boroughs of Lampeter and Tregaron—the latter by prescription—and the decayed borough of Adpar, and lastly, the small but thriving ports on the bay such as Aberaeron and New Quay. All these towns—with the exception of Adpar—were busy places, and supported populations very different from those of their hinterlands. They were communities of tradespeople and craftsmen and mariners; centres of local government, and entrepôts for the basic requirements of agricultural life. They tended to be highly mixed communities as well, rich and relatively poor living side by side, though as, for example, Aberystwyth grew in size there would appear to have been an increasing tendency for the classes to move apart—there was a recognized ‘working-class district’¹⁹—and for the dominant trades to occupy distinct parts of the town. Cardigan can be taken as typical of the other towns in the extreme diversity of trades occupying the same streets. For instance, Pant-y-cleifion Street contained a schoolmaster, tailors, dressmakers, a mason, washerwomen, a cabinet maker, fishermen, mariners, a gamekeeper, a soldier, a butcher, a variety of shopkeepers, and Richard D. Jenkins, Esq., the mayor, J.P., alderman, captain in the volunteers, who occupied two houses. He was a solicitor by profession,

farmed 410 acres, employed fourteen labourers besides an unspecified number of women, and, in addition to his family of four, gave bed and board to a governess and domestic, coachman, footman, cook, nurse, housemaid, and kitchen maid.²⁰ In all the main towns there were substantial men such as Jenkins, either professional people such as lawyers or surgeons, or tradesmen, builders, shipbuilders, living cheek by jowl with scores of other lesser tradesmen in these tight, various, diverse communities, aware of their skills, jealous of their rights, precise in their knowledge of the functioning of their towns and of their place within them. Compared with the countryside, therefore, the sheer numbers and diversities of trades and degrees of wealth within the same circumscribed communities are striking. Relatively speaking, they were also freer communities, and their freedoms were likely to be commensurate with their size. It is true that even the largest of them, Aberystwyth, could not have escaped, even if it had wished to do so, the entrenched privileges and omnipresent influence of the Gogerddan and Nanteos families. The system of town government, but slightly modified in its externals since 1834, was still liable to the 'diktats' of those families, and although, since 1832, they could no longer obtain their ends by mere nomination to the chief offices, the sheer weight of tradition and the facts of power determined that their wishes on crucial matters, particularly those of a political nature, could never be ignored.

Quite different from these towns were the communities of lead miners in the hills. These remote and rugged places, on the frontiers of civilization almost, lacked totally the delightful variety and complex social organizations of the lowland towns. Take, for instance, the large district of Ystumtuen. In 1861, the township contained 189 houses, 487 males, and 527 females. Of these, 163 of the men were lead miners, there were 49 female and 23 male ore-dressers, 8 mine labourers, and 14 other men directly employed in the mines. There were 21 small farmers, the usual shopkeepers, a schoolteacher, an innkeeper, and a book distributor (probably an itinerant). In fact, here was a community wholly dependent upon one industry. In the parish of upper Llanfihangel-y-creuddyn, which included the Cwmystwyth lead-mining township, and had a total population of 494, all the men and some of the women were directly engaged in lead mining. The only tradesmen (apart from the technical tradesmen engaged in the mines) were a shoe-maker, a shopkeeper, two drapers and a grocer, and a silk and cotton and wool weaver. It is necessary to stress that they were not only uniform economically, but small, remote, cut off by distance from the lowland centres, struggling communities where life was hard, and where the women and the children from a very early

age were expected to contribute their labour to the harsh, unhealthy business of extracting lead from the mountain-sides.

I have devoted this space to an analysis of the structure of county society because the evidence suggests that here we have two types of society profoundly differing from each other and producing, therefore, two different kinds of political life. The difference is between the closed society of the rural areas and the relatively open society of the towns. There can be no question but that in the rural areas, and including the small townships and the lead-mining communities, society was founded on degree and place, and on the traditional values which were, as likely as not, to be unchallenged, accepted along with the necessity to work in accordance with the immutable succession of the seasons. It was the outsiders who thought of Cardiganshire as 'always the breeding-ground of Toryism'. It was the city-bred politician, likewise, who referred with scorn or astonishment—but rarely with pity and understanding—to the slavish, menial attitudes of the tenantry in relation to their lords.²¹ We are prone to accept these value judgements, and then, by a natural progression, to search for explanations of these phenomena in the economic plight of the small farmers and labouring classes, and so to justify them. It is true that there is evidence enough in governmental reports on health, pauperism, and education to support these contentions, and literary evidence galore. 'Mae rhy fach o wahaniaeth yn awr rhwng y bugail a'i gi,' wrote Gwilym Marles the Unitarian, in 1865,²² of the shepherd boys of south Cardiganshire, and this can be taken as generally applicable not only to the farming communities in their scattered homesteads, but to the boys and girls who, from a very tender age, sorted the lead ores in the mining communities. What political activity could they know, except what their forefathers had known, the formal, sometimes frolicking, visits to the polling booths on the very rare 'diwrnod lecsiwn' to watch their betters cast their votes? The descriptions we have from the pens of such as Kilsby and Henry Richard and the eloquent local correspondents of newspapers and magazines are all written from a point of view totally and utterly alien to the deferential societies they observed. Slavish mentality, looked at from the inside, becomes a form of behaviour rooted in the soil, expressive of ancient social values and conventions, and sustained by religious doctrine as old as the system itself—from Elizabethan homily and beyond to Methodist sermon and hymn. Of course, this is a statement in moral terms of economic and social realities. What relation other than that of social inferiority could exist when a tenant confronted the absolute owner of thousands of acres, whose livery, perhaps, his forefathers had worn? Moreover, there would seem to be no cogent reason why one

should doubt that, at the time we are writing of, and generally speaking, the relation was held to be a good one. One reads oftener of the affection which the Pryses and Powells and Vaughans elicited than its opposite. The dependence of tenants on a good conscientious landlord was not thought to entail servility on the one side or tyranny on the other. Wealth and the ownership of large acres brought great privileges ; but it also entailed high responsibilities, and the relation between high and low was held to be reciprocal.

The secrets of such organic deferential societies could not be understood by the outsider. They were likelier to find the tensions and relationships they were accustomed to in the towns. Here, and here only, for the most part, was there an indigenous political life, and here only could the language of contemporary political dispute find a response. Again, this reflected the different economic and social realities. The craftsman, master of his trade, the commercial man, the professional man, owners of property, with money invested in their businesses and, it might be, in ships and mines, were aware of the competitive element in life, and town government, like the managing of their affairs, or the perfecting of their crafts, was a process of which they were aware and to a share in which they aspired. Town life breeds individualism ; and respect and eminence are given to him that earns it rather than by hereditary descent. Moreover, implicit in the history of the chartered boroughs was conflict : the burgesses believed that their liberties had been granted them after negotiation, and negotiation implies, at least, a kind of equality and freedom where rights are concerned. In fact, the Cardiganshire towns were not outstanding for the quality of their political life ; they were too small for the most part, their rate of growth too gradual, they were too integrated in, and dependent on, the life of the countryside, to be largely independent, and all had a history of gentry control. It was unthinkable in 1865, as it had been for generations before, that Aberystwyth should produce its own genuine burgess member of parliament. There were men rich enough to carry the cost of a contest, but the highest political service they could reasonably aspire to was what their forefathers had done—propose or second the nomination of a Pryse on election day. The reason is clear : Aberystwyth did not have a tradition of political independence. Its constitutional framework had survived largely to serve the needs of the house of Gogerddan. ‘ In respect of local government,’ wrote the editor of the local newspaper, ‘ it has a town council, with property, but without public functions.’²³ This, again, was not necessarily a symptom of servility or of a lack of civic pride. It was the measure of the innate conservatism of a people

beholden to the great agricultural interest they served and from whom they were recruited.

However much alien politicians might deplore these social facts and attitudes, in practice they had to recognize the reality of the situation. Thus, when Henry Richard, backed by the Liberation Society, came down to contest the seat in 1865, the first thing he did was to consult Gogerddan and opinion in the towns. Later, after his agents had visited Bronwydd to learn what the baronet's intentions were, he retired.²⁴ His reason for so doing must be accepted ; under no circumstances was he to split the Liberal vote. But judging by his subsequent statements, and from other evidence, the decision of Sir Thomas to stand merely gave the 'coup de grâce' to Richard's pretensions. It was the failure of Cardiganshire Nonconformists to show any independent spirit whatever which forced him to withdraw so unceremoniously and in such a bad humour. No candidate, it was thought, could afford to stand without at least the passive assistance of the landed proprietors. The voters would tend to measure the extent of this rather than weigh conflicting ideologies in deciding where to give their support.

But, you will object, David Davies stood. Precisely; and it is this outrageous, unpolitical action of his that is new in the election, that gives the parliamentary history of the county a new twist. Davies did not consult Pryse ; he consulted no-one ; he merely sent two of his associates, David Howells, a solicitor of Machynlleth, and a one-time partner, Ezra Davies, to the house of John Matthews to tell that highly-embarrassed man that he was in the field.²⁵ A little later he informed the hastily convened meeting of startled Nonconformists in Aberaeron that he would contest the seat against either Lloyd or Powell and break the grip of Toryism on the county. It was Davies's intervention and not Richard's, as stated by the majority of commentators, which caused Powell to retire, for it was Davies's money alone which could break the gentry grip. If Richard's first action had been to consult Pryse, David Davies's first action had been to deposit, so it was said, £10,000 in an Aberystwyth bank—'ale money for the battle,' as John Matthews commented. Indeed, from this point of view, the election begins to look like a contest between two kinds of wealth, the affluent railway contractor pitting his ready cash and ruthless commercial methods against the sedate and comfortable but strained resources of the rural gentry. His strongest and most sustained appeal was to the town-dwellers, to those who could best understand his language, who would be less liable to resent his methods, whose interests were bound up with his own. This is certainly the impression we get from the speeches he himself delivered, and those made by his

supporters. Thus, in the nomination speech made by Jones of Llwyn-y-groes, the wealthy Aberystwyth Nonconformist, the emphasis, almost to the exclusion of everything else, was on the candidate's investment in the county, on the benefits this was conferring on the county. Davies himself dilated on this theme, presenting himself as the philanthropic employer of three-thousand workmen.²⁶ He was called a thorough Liberal, but no one defined this. On the other hand, Sir Thomas Davies Lloyd scarcely needed to be presented, and for his part, he attacked Davies by implying that he was a bird of passage, and that his investments in the county were by no means disinterested. Lloyd had much to say about politics, and gave some specific pledges on some issues likely to arise in the next parliament. He made no pretence to being a radical ; he was a Whig turned Liberal who would judge administrations and measures on their merits. On the one issue which radicals thought to be pre-eminent in the election, namely, the question of the ballot, neither candidate would change the present system. It is, in fact, difficult to see what the election was about if not about personalities and the confrontation of the old traditional society by an oblique, somewhat confusing, impression of new and scarcely understood forces of industrial wealth.

This is not to say that there was not an ideological factor present in the situation ; there was, and this was represented by Nonconformity. Professor David Williams has already published a study of the Census of Religious Worship of 1851 relating to Cardiganshire, and it is not necessary to repeat his conclusions here beyond reminding you that by 1851, and probably for some considerable time before that date, the county was overwhelmingly Nonconformist.²⁷ What is important for our purpose is the denominational pattern. It was believed to be a Calvinistic Methodist county, and with some justice ; they were the strongest single denomination. But they were not distributed equally throughout the county, the line of division running from east to west, the Methodists being strongest in the Unions of Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, and Tregaron, the older dissenting sects in the southern Unions. In the south, also, were to be found the fourteen Unitarian chapels, five in Lampeter district, four in Aberaeron, and five in Newcastle Emlyn (including parishes in Pembrokeshire). No-one has investigated this curious division. One suspects that it might have something to do with the quality of leadership displayed during the classical period of expansion by such worthies as Dr. Phillips, of Neuadd-lwyd, or Azariah Shadrach, these patterns of leadership reflecting social differences within the county which we can but guess at.²⁸

More to our present purpose are the questions, what rôle was organized religion expected to play in 1865, and what rôle did it in

fact play? Both Henry Richard and David Davies anticipated overwhelming support from the Nonconformists. Henry Richard was thought to have the advantage of being a well-known Congregationalist, who had started his career as a minister, and was also the son of one of the apostles of Calvinistic Methodism, born and bred in that stronghold of Methodism, Tregaron. He could appeal, therefore (so it was averred), equally to all Nonconformists. David Davies appeared as a Calvinistic Methodist deacon, and it is certain that his appeal as such was a strong one, though again, it is impossible to confirm this.²⁹ It is the experience of Henry Richard which affords us some clues to the extent to which voluntaryism as a political creed had interpenetrated Cardiganshire Nonconformity. As already stated, the real reason why he withdrew so unceremoniously from the contest was his bitter disappointment at the quality and extent of the support he expected to find. He had been more sanguine than the facts merited, and the facts, I think, were these. Nonconformity in Cardiganshire was not, at that stage, a political movement, not even to any marked extent in the south of the county. The Liberation Society, which arranged Richard's candidacy, supplying him with agents, had never been even moderately successful in its operations as compared with the rest of the country.³⁰ Up to 1860, from the foundation of the Society nearly sixteen years previously, there had been an intermittent dribble of subscriptions and donations varying from half-a-crown to £1.18.0, all from Independent churches in the south—from Llechryd, Wern, Cardigan, and New Quay. Not until 1860 did Aberystwyth people begin to contribute, and then in insubstantial sums ranging from a little over £3 in 1860 to £7 odd in 1867. In some years there was no contribution made. Talybont seems to have been the only other place sufficiently interested to contribute to the Society's funds.³¹ If this can be taken as a measure of the response of Cardiganshire Nonconformists to the most radical and active section of political Dissent, then the conclusion is obvious. But there is further evidence which points to the conclusion that many of the leading ministers, even among the older denominations, resented the intrusion of politics into religion. The *Baner* reported that Nonconformists campaigned against Davies, and singled out as a rare exception the example of a young Independent minister who had worked for Davies despite the pressure of his older colleagues.³² The explanation for this situation is, I think, a social one; that Nonconformity itself conformed to the social pattern, adapted itself to the social 'mores' current in the different localities. How else can we explain the attitudes of the Unitarians in the south, generally held to be radicals of an extreme kind? It is not, I think, the fact of the existence of Unitarianism as such that is important, but the locale

in which it is found. It is true that a radical theological creed can sometimes carry radical political views of an extreme social kind, but only where social conditions are such as to generate them. Or consider the peculiarities of Capel-y-Drindod ; there is no doubt how the Congregationalist-Methodists, or Methodistical-Congregationalists, voted ; they were ' not unappropriately', said John Matthews, designated ' Guinea Pigs'.³³ Capel-y-Drindod was not the only example of an imposed ecumenism. Bwlch-y-groes, in Llangunllo parish, was somewhat similar in its origins.³⁴ Put at its lowest, the situation was that described by the Reverend John Jones, of Blaenannerch, a Methodist, who said that Calvinistic Methodists would vote for any landowner who gave them leases for chapel building ; or, on a higher level, the refusal of John Matthews, a deacon at Tabernacle, Aberystwyth, to do anything in the election which might endanger the chapel lease, granted by Powell of Nanteos, which was due for renewal.³⁵ Was the question of church-rates now, or at any other time, a burning issue in Cardiganshire ? Or was the situation in Llangunllo, where Bronwydd was the dominant house, typical—where the churchwarden was an Independent, and where Independents rated themselves ?³⁶

Too much should not be made, therefore, of the post-election pronouncements of the two Nonconformist candidates. Henry Richard states that he now realized what a mistake it had been to withdraw, since all the county's Nonconformists were united in his favour.³⁷ David Davies, thanking the electors for their support, claimed that the election proved the county to be overwhelmingly Liberal.³⁸ I hope that enough has been said to doubt these statements ; neither was true at the time. Nevertheless, much had been accomplished, and there was, perhaps, some factual basis to Davies's contention that the county would never go Tory again. At least, history has more or less justified him. But if it were to go Liberal, what kind of Liberalism would it be ? That it should remain the Bronwydd type of Liberalism—what Kilsby Jones aptly described as a half-way house between Toryism and Nonconformity—was more than likely, since this was fairly representative of the Whiggism of the landowners. The desirable objective for such as Richard and the Nonconformist wing was that the county should be represented by a Welsh Liberationist. To achieve such an end, however, was a task of incredible difficulty, and was possibly far too much to hope for by reason of the tremendous inertia of rural life. Richard Cobden, writing to his friend Henry Richard in 1851, had remarked that all new or radical political bodies faced the problem of how to make their power felt at the hustings.³⁹ This was still the problem fifteen years later, particularly in rural

counties undisturbed by the transforming power of industry and population growth. One does not need to be told by disillusioned editors of contemporary journals that there was a terrible and enervating lack of interest in political questions in Cardiganshire in those years ; one feels this, reading their magazines, to be true. Even during elections there was very little real discussion of issues ; the hustings were a facade only. Kilsby noted shortly after the election, when he had had time to reflect, that there were fewer Liberal landlords in Cardiganshire than he had expected, and that those few were not radical. Kilsby, be it noted, was thinking not of the great proprietors, or the large squires, but of the lesser landlords. Hence, it follows that if the Nonconformists' aim was to be realized, reliance would have to be placed on the urban middle-class element in the population. Coming from Kilsby, this is ironic, for the whole purpose of his famous article was to demonstrate that the election had not been about social questions, but about political ones. Now, at the time of writing the above letter, it is a social analysis he has been forced to make, and this corresponded very closely to the conclusion reached by hard-headed Aberdare Liberationists at about the same time, namely, that what was needed in rural Wales was a strong middle class to stiffen the lower tenancy.⁴⁰

What, then, was done ? Obviously, the constituency could be nursed. Both Davies and the Liberation Society did this fairly assiduously. The former, in characteristic fashion, proceeded to make substantial gifts to chapels—£100 to the new one at Borth, £100 to the new English Independent chapel at Aberystwyth, and £300 for the British Schoolroom.⁴¹ He was anxious, wrote John Matthews, to do something for the people along the coast—that is to say, the places through which his railway ran, and which Lloyd had taken by small majorities.⁴² In this way, Davies refurbished his Nonconformist image, and softened-up the constituents. The Liberation Society, in a more round-about way, did this also, Mr. Samuel Morley, the eminent Nonconformist philanthropist, coming to the aid of various chapels with expanding fashionable congregations but slender resources.⁴³ Far more practical was to see to the register, and this the Liberation Society did by employing their chief spokesman in Cardiganshire, Thomas Harries, of Llechryd.⁴⁴ Both these types of operation were necessary, but what use were they, if the people remained politically unawakened, or apathetic ? Hence the concurrent drive of the Society to improve its organisation and intensify its propaganda in the county—activities which I have described elsewhere—particularly in the coastal towns. There can be no doubt that these activities together made some impression.

More revealing as to the nature of the problem confronting politicians in Cardiganshire, and of the nature of politics at that time, are two schemes which did not succeed. I refer to the attempt to establish a newspaper at Aberystwyth in opposition to the *Observer*, and the plan to create a Welsh Land Freehold Society. Kilsby Jones initiated both of these, and to his honour it cannot be said that this was the reason for their failure. The idea of a Welsh Freehold Society was new, though not unexpected, for a pattern existed in the National Freehold Land Company, which Cobden had founded in order to create freehold votes for the Anti-Corn-Law League, and which still existed in a moribund state.⁴⁵ Also, there appeared to have been a similar Company at Llanfyllin in the 1860's.⁴⁶ Kilsby's idea was to establish a joint-stock company with a capital of £100,000 which would be invested in mortgages yielding about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent—as profitable as any railway debentures, thought David Davies—and which would be used to assist people to build on their freeholds—to give the common people, farmers and the like, a stake in their counties. £20,000 to £25,000 of this would be allocated to Cardiganshire, and provided that it was regarded and run as a commercial venture, David Davies promised that he would invest considerably more than £1,000 in it. There would be national directors, including, it was hoped (too sanguinely as it turned out), Mr. Corbett of Towyn, Chairman, Mrs. Jones of Llwyn-y-groes, David Williams of Penrhyndeudraeth, David Davies, and Mr. Savin. Cardiganshire names mentioned included Mr. Jones of Borth (the cousin of Jones, Llwyn-y-groes), Robert Edwards of Aberystwyth, and John Jones (Ivon), the last-named acting as some kind of agent as well as being on the directorate. In addition, Dr. Pughe of Aberdovey, a prominent radical, was to be co-opted on the Cardiganshire side. Kilsby wanted the Company to be strongly Methodist in composition, but alas, it failed to attract the substantial Methodists of Aberystwyth, and Kilsby then sounded out London Welshmen, though he still wanted the headquarters of the Company to be in Aberystwyth, in the Skinners' Arms, then up for sale. Hugh Owen appears to have embraced the scheme with enthusiasm, and took over the organization from the despairing Kilsby, and it was probably Owen who convinced Kilsby of the impossibility of interesting the Welsh squirearchy in it, and that it would have to be carried out by men of business of the upper middle class.⁴⁷ After all, this was the year when Hugh Owen and Dr. Nicholas were trying to persuade the National Eisteddfod to help in the creation of a similarly financed and run joint-stock Welsh Grammar School company for the production of middle-class youths for their middle-class University.⁴⁸ Like the Grammar School scheme this one, too, died in the hands of Hugh

Owen, and nothing more was heard of it. Why? Because there were no middle class farmers or commercial men in Cardiganshire prepared to risk their capital in a political scheme masquerading as a business venture.

The scheme for a Liberal newspaper suffered a similar fate—antenatal social anaemia and financial malnutrition. Its fate was closely involved in that of the Land Company because it had, so to speak, been conceived in the same stable. It had its origin in what Kilsby regarded as the scandalous partiality of the *Observer* in the late election, and its main function was to circulate among the Methodist majority of the northern part of the county, and create a public opinion among them on political questions. On the face of it, the scheme was a modest and realistic one. Kilsby discovered a certain Mr. Hughes, who was employed by the London firm of Mackenzie as their Welsh reader and compositor, who was prepared to do the printing. The initial investment in machinery and type was not expected to exceed £400, and the Skinners' Arms would provide admirable premises as well as be the headquarters of the Land Company.⁴⁹ Why did this modest undertaking fail? It is impossible to tell, but one suspects that sufficient backing by the right kind of men could not be found in Aberystwyth. It seems that some of the most well-to-do Methodists, like Mr. Jones, the Ropewalk, were not entirely sympathetic, and anyway, one doubts whether Aberystwyth could possibly have supported yet another newspaper which would have to exist mainly on local advertising support.

From this it will be observed that, from the point of view of reforming politicians, the problem of Cardiganshire was both a social and an educational one. People needed to be taught politics, or rather, taught to extract from their religion the political doctrines thought to be implicit in it, but the primary task must be to free them of the nexus of social inhibitions in which they were imprisoned. Landlords could always use the powers they possessed to coerce into conformity the few individuals on their estates who wished to act independently of these masters. Such powers had rarely been used in the county, and it is virtually certain that little pressure was exerted in 1865. It is interesting, also, to note that in the opinion of some observers it was less the landlords directly who coerced the lower tenancy than the lawyers, many of whom held small mortgages on their farms. Someone estimated in 1860 that £5,000 would free most of the small-holdings of these encumbrances, and therefore their holders of the possibility of being screwed.⁵⁰ What evidence for this exists, I do not know, but it is not improbable. Coercion was not used in 1865 because, in a way, the Tory squires had made a tactical error in failing to contest the seat

themselves. They had lacked leadership, had looked towards Traws-coed for a sign,⁵¹ and when none had been forthcoming, had fallen into the error of discussing the merits of the two Liberal candidates—trying to define the undefinable. And if Liberalism was undefinable at that time, so was Toryism. It was said that some Tories had found Davies more genuinely Conservative than Lloyd, and they had acted accordingly,⁵² showing, perhaps, in this a rare perceptiveness, as if foretelling the future inclinations of that politician. But this indecisiveness had been the Nonconformists' opportunity, and the taste of freedom had been sweet in some mouths. Yet, what would the situation be in a future election on a wider franchise with a thoroughgoing and acceptable Tory in the field? It was not to be expected that the leading Tory families would again permit both seats to be held by Liberals, and it was certain that they would fight hard to return to the old tradition whereby the two seats had been shared by the two parties.

It is curious, nevertheless, to mark how tardily the Tories prepared for the coming election. They had no public organization whatsoever, no registration society, and it seems that they relied throughout upon an unofficial organization of their voting power by traditional means, that is to say, by recruiting all the available lawyers in the county, and employing estate agents as party managers in the localities. Of course, the Liberals used these means also, but behind them lay effectively organized party caucuses, both 'county' and Nonconformists, backed by the prestige of the two sitting members, the expertise of the Liberation Society, and the funds of David Davies and Samuel Morley. Moreover, both Pryse and Lloyd were shedding their Whiggism, and they could claim by their votes in parliament to be, in some respects, more advanced than Gladstone himself.⁵³ Both declared themselves wholeheartedly in favour of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, while keeping the Liberationists at arm's length. This phenomenon we can take as indicative of the growth of Liberal opinion in the county, for in these respects the two representatives were not so much giving a lead to county opinion as responding to it. This was particularly true as 1868 approached, for the main issues before the country—the Irish Church question and Nonconformist grievances—would be decided on a much wider franchise, the effect of which would be to bring within the county constituency those sizeable sea-ports, such as New Quay, and inland townships, such as Pont-rhyd-fendigaid, where Nonconformity was strongly entrenched and well organized, but which had been only partially represented in the past.

There is no space to describe in detail the election of 1868, but some important features must be discussed. First of all, the choice of candid-

ates. The leading Conservatives of the county met at Aberaeron on 19 May, and there decided to invite Edmund Mallet Vaughan, a nephew of the Earl of Lisburne, to contest the seat. No other candidate was seriously considered, for though the best that could be said of him was that he was young, and the worst that his digestion was stronger than his intellect, no stronger candidate could be found since he would automatically have the support of two of the great proprietors, Lisburne and Powell, the remaining Tory squires traditionally following the lead of these two. On the same day, a Liberal caucus met at Cardigan to discuss the representation of the boroughs, the sitting member, Colonel Pryse, having let it be known that he would retire if a suitable candidate could be found to succeed him. In the meantime, Lloyd of Bronwydd, the county member, had also declared that he was not prepared to stand the cost of yet another contested election, but that he would, if invited, accept nomination for the borough seat in the event of Pryse's resignation, where he would be virtually certain of an unopposed return. Hence, on the 26th, Pryse formally announced his retirement, and Lloyd was nominated to succeed him, these arrangements being confirmed at a meeting at Aberaeron in July where the Liberals of the other boroughs pledged their support, and at which it was made known that he would have the support of Nanteos. This settled the affairs of the borough seat.⁵⁴

This left the county seat without a Liberal candidate. Henry Richard, for whom the Liberationists had been nursing the seat, had long since transferred his interests to the more congenial constituency of Merthyr Tydfil, while Davies was still not *persona grata* with Gogerddan. Hence the choice, late in August, of Evan Matthews Richards, of Swansea, to contest the seat as a Welsh Nonconformist Liberal.

Much can be learned about the shape and strength of opinion in the county by studying the candidature of this man and the contest which followed. There were clear resemblances between him and his predecessor, David Davies. In the first place, he was rich. Money, in large quantities, was essential in order to compensate for the serious deficiencies of being non-resident and not a landowner. In fact, the election cost him the comparatively modest sum of £2,084—or £1 a voter—almost £1,000 less than Vaughan's expenses, a discrepancy to be explained by the fact that the Lisburne interest, having been earlier in the field, had already engaged practically every lawyer in the county on their side.⁵⁵ A more interesting resemblance between the two lay in their appeal to the middle classes by reason of their commercial interests. Davies's investments in railways were tangible contributions to the wealth of the county, the results being already evident, so it was said, in the rebuilding of places like Lampeter, in the

development of the watering-places along the coast, and the transformation of places like Tregaron. Richards held out the promise of investing money in new techniques of ore extraction to be used in his Swansea lead and silver works. This kind of appeal could not be disregarded, as it was everywhere believed that Cardiganshire was potentially one of the richer counties in Wales if only ways and means could be found to exploit its mineral resources.⁵⁶ This was the theme of many speeches and articles, and there can be no doubt that the townsfolk, many of whom had county voting qualifications, found the appeal irresistible.

But the differences between the two men are equally revealing. There had been something eccentric, an element of defiance, and more than a suggestion of fortuitousness in Davies's candidature. Richards's, by contrast, was carefully contrived, and a nice, calculated balance preserved between the old and the new. In the first place, nothing was done without the active concurrence, if not participation, of the house of Gogerddan. Thus, in July, the Liberal caucus at Aberystwyth made official approaches to Pryse on his behalf. Shortly afterwards, Lewis Llewellyn Dillwyn, Liberal member for the Swansea borough, Richards's partner in the spelter works at Swansea, and a man of considerable standing in Glamorgan county society, communicated with Colonel Pryse, and finally, in early August, Richards travelled to Aberystwyth to meet the head of the house. Only then, on 18 August, did he issue his *Address* to the electors.⁵⁷ No candidate, whatever his qualifications, could have hoped to do even reasonably well without assuring himself of this support. Throughout the subsequent campaign, and wherever he went, inside or outside Gogerddan territory, Richards proudly displayed this support, presenting himself almost as a favourite son, while the Pryses, on their part, chaired his meetings at Aberystwyth.⁵⁸

More revealing than this, however, were Richards's relations with Nonconformity. Here, the ranks were divided almost as badly as they had been in 1865, between the Liberationists on the one hand and the more orthodox Liberals on the other. These latter were in a great majority. The anti-Liberationist party, be it noted, was the Liberal party; its most bitter and vociferous opponents were not county Tories but town-dwellers and leading Liberal squires like Colonel Wagner of Aber-eifed, near Cardigan, Mr. Hughes of Castell-du, Mr. Jones of Llwyn-y-groes, the lawyer Asa Evans, and such like. Their attitude was based partly, no doubt, on resentment of the fact that the Liberation Society was usurping the functions of the old Liberal leadership in the county. They objected to the social pretensions of Mr. Harries of Llechryd and the Cardigan minister, William Jones, who called the

meeting at Aberaeron in May to discuss the representation of the county, and which initiated action by approaching Colonel Pryse. They resented, too—as they had done in 1865—the importation of strangers, paid servants of the Society, into the affairs of the county, and they viewed with bitterness and dismay the spectacle of an alien body parcelling out the rest of the county for its own nefarious political purposes.⁵⁹ It is clear that this resentment was intermixed with ideological considerations. Part of the social situation was the fact that the doctrines of the Society were not acceptable in, and felt not to be applicable to, rural life. We must not forget that the Liberation Society was identified not merely with the separation of Church from State, but with political doctrines of an extreme kind. These do not appear to have been propagated in Cardiganshire, and, it seems to me, would have received little or no response anyway, because the Society's intellectuals thought in terms of an urban context. The social problems in the county were of a different kind, and only later, during the great agricultural depression, would radicals espouse levelling ideas and begin to talk in terms of absentee landlords keeping open an exhausting drain of money from the poor agricultural districts. Social tensions were reduced here by the fact of migration—migration on an increasing scale, in some places, almost double the rate of natural increase. Here, as elsewhere, the rise of industrial towns in South Wales acted as a safety-valve for rural discontent. Disestablishment was not, for most of the people of Cardiganshire, a real issue, because it was not a social issue—or was not yet seen to be a social issue. Hence Richards's careful repudiation of the Society in explicit terms wherever he went, and in whatever was said or published on his behalf. 'Without', as he put it, 'wishing to throw dirt on that Society,'⁶⁰ he carefully pointed out that his surname was Richards—with an 's'—not Richard. Clearly, a confusion between him and Henry Richard was likely to lose him votes. For Henry Richard, the importance of Irish disestablishment was as establishing a precedent, a preliminary to Welsh disestablishment; for what was good for Ireland, there being no essential difference between the two situations, was, *parri passu*, good for Wales. Not so E. M. Richards. This worthy Baptist who, despite his protestations, had consistently supported and co-operated with the Society in Glamorgan, now gave a clear undertaking that he was not at present prepared to vote for the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales. There can be no doubt that in this he was acting in accordance not merely with undertakings he had probably given Colonel Pryse, but also responding to Liberal opinion in the county.

Yet, however equivocal Richards might in fact have been on the political objectives of extreme Dissent, he most certainly felt himself to

be, and wanted the voters to feel themselves to be, a part of that movement of the political consciousness of the Welsh people which was manifesting itself in the contest at Merthyr Tydfil and in Denbighshire, Merioneth, and Anglesey. This was partly the reason why he brought the Glamorgan members of Parliament—Bruce, Vivian, and Dillwyn—to Aberystwyth to speak in his favour at a meeting chaired by Sir Pryse Pryse. In this way, the political isolation of Cardiganshire was being broken down, and the events of the election being given a wider significance.

And the Conservative candidate? Compared with the Liberals he scarcely campaigned at all. His Address, a perfunctory, ill-composed, platitudinous document, might have been sufficient in any pre-1865 election. It was greeted now, even by men sympathetic to him, with derision, and he was compelled to publish a slightly more explicit one.⁶¹ The contrast here is between two different attitudes to local politics and electioneering. It seemed as if the Vaughan party did indeed think it sufficient merely to employ virtually all the lawyers of the county, and to rely on the persuasive abilities of landlords. What could they rely on but these traditional methods? As the contest developed it became clear that coercion would be used more blatantly than ever before, and that on some estates many tenants would be faced with the option of voting with their landlords or suffering eviction. In his evidence before the Hartington Committee in 1869, Thomas Harries claimed to have investigated two-hundred cases of notices to quit being sent to tenants, and alleged that undue influence was exerted by Tory landowners acting in concert against village shopkeepers from whom their custom was withdrawn, of parish officers being removed, and congregations turned out of their rooms. It is clear that not all of these instances were in Cardiganshire—Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire seem to have suffered equally—but some of his attested examples concerned south Cardiganshire farms. One particular example, for which evidence was produced, showed how pressure began to be exerted as early as the rent-day in 1865 (25 March) when the landlord enclosed a letter with the receipt pointing out that an election would take place before Christmas, and expressing the hope that the tenant would vote on the same side as the landlord. This was followed in November by another letter regretting the information which had reached the landlord to the effect that the tenant was wavering in opinions, and followed in March 1869, after the election, by a notice to quit. Harries insisted that the majority of evictions were probably for political reasons. The difference between the election of 1868 and previous ones was that the Irish Church question made it difficult for Nonconformist tenants to vote with their landlords (Harries remarked,

‘ We have been very stagnant in politics in Wales ; it is only within the last few years that we have come to feel a little more interest in the subject ’) and that it was the religious issue in 1868 which stimulated controversy and hardened attitudes.⁶² Richards and his supporters deliberately fostered these anti-social attitudes, as the Conservatives would have regarded them, appealing to the tenants to vote according to conscience and by conviction whatever the consequences. It may, indeed, have been those who listened and had the astonishing courage to act accordingly who won the election for Richards. His majority was only 156 in a poll of 4,000.⁶³ Only in Aberystwyth was his majority fairly substantial (16 *per cent*), and the explanation for this is not difficult to find. After all, it was not merely Richards who had consulted the territorial magnate before presenting himself. Involved in this exercise in deferential politics were also his presumed supporters, the Nonconformists who had failed to support either Henry Richard or David Davies in 1865 rather than offend Gogerddan. Only in the north of the county, therefore, where freedom to vote according to conscience really meant freedom to vote with Gogerddan, was the Liberal majority assured. In Cardigan district the Nonconformist-Liberal majority was only about 9 *per cent*, in Aberaeron 6 *per cent*, and in Llandysul about 8 *per cent*. In Lampeter and Tregaron Richards was in a minority, and these were the districts which had given Davies majorities over Lloyd in 1865, and these were the areas where undue influence and coercion were exercised in their most naked forms. Well might Welsh Nonconformist-Liberals establish a fund to support the sufferers—‘ Fund y Gorthrymedigion ’—however doubtful the political morality implied in such a movement. To speak, therefore, of a Liberal victory in Cardiganshire in 1868 is in some senses inadmissible. The ice had been broken, and in the process people had suffered, but it would still be some time before the changes initiated by David Davies in 1865 would be brought to fruition and Cardiganshire would describe itself as the most Liberal county in Wales.

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NOTES

1. A lecture delivered before the Society at Aberystwyth on 12 December 1964.
2. *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1964, Part 1), pp. 41-68.
3. 'Etholiadau Ceredigion a Meirionydd, gan Awdwr "Adgofion am Ysgol Neuadd-lwyd",' *Y Traethodydd*, 3rd Series, Vol. IV (1865), pp. 488-512.
For another example of his polemical style see *Kilsby Jones's Deliverance on Toryism versus Liberalism. An Address delivered at Dolgelly, on Friday, July 21st, 1865 to the Electors of Merionethshire* (Aberystwyth, 1865).
4. Both John Matthews and John Jones are noticed in *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (1959), the former *sub. nom.* John Matthews (1773-1848), his father.
5. See the letter of John Matthews to E. L. Pryse, Esq., dated 28 August 1856, in *Letters of John Matthews*, NLW MS. 8321.
6. The letters of Kilsby to John Jones are preserved in NLW MS. 3291.
7. *The Welshman*, 12 August 1864. The election is best studied in this weekly newspaper and in the files of *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* (hereinafter cited as *Baner*).
8. Details of the poll are as follows, based on *The Welshman*, 21 July 1865 ;

<i>Polling District</i>	<i>Votes Cast</i>	<i>For Lloyd</i>	<i>For Davies</i>	<i>% Lloyd</i>	<i>% Davies</i>
Cardigan ..	425	360	65	84.7	15.3
Aberaeron ..	514	299	215	58.1	41.9
Lampeter ..	220	94	126	42.7	57.3
Tregaron ..	386	96	290	24.9	75.1
Llandysul ..	263	200	63	76.1	23.9
Aberystwyth ..	851	461	390	54.1	45.9
	2659	1510	1149	56.7	43.3

9. For Davies's Address see *Baner*, 2 August 1865 ; it is also printed in full in Kilsby's article cited above. See also the article 'Etholiad Aberteifi' in *Baner*, 26 July 1865. Henry Richard's Address, dated from London, 14 July 1865, can be read in *ibid.*, 19 July 1865, or in *Y Byd Cymreig*, 13 July 1865. For typical comment see the review of Kilsby's *Traethodydd* article in *Y Cronicl*, Vol. XXIII (November, 1865), p. 303.
10. On this see an interesting correspondence in *The Welshman*, 1 September 1865. Davies estimated that the construction of the railway from Lampeter to Aberaeron would cost £110,000 (including rolling stock). Of this sum, £30,000 could be borrowed, leaving £80,000 to be raised locally—a quarter of what the whole of Wales had subscribed during the past seven years towards the cost of constructing 700 miles of railways. Obviously, Davies himself would not invest in the venture.
11. The edition of 1883 was used in the preparation of this paper.
12. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1874, LXXII (1097).
13. J. M. Howells, in his paper 'The Crosswood Estate, 1547-1947,' *ante* (1956), shows that the estate, though heavily encumbered, was still intact. Income from rents in 1870 totalled £10,590, and lead royalties averaged £3,725 *per annum* between 1860 and 1868 (*ibid.*, pp. 15-16).

14. The holdings of the major landed proprietors were as follows :

Lisburne	42,890 acres	
Pryse	26,684	
Powell	21,933 91,507
Harford	5,782	
Gwynne	3,794 9,576

		101,083
Total acreage of county	398,657	
Total waste in county	6,971	

Total cultivated acreage	391,686	

15. Details are as follows :

7 families owned a total of	27,752 acres
20 families owned a total of	58,256 „
18 families owned a total of	32,370 „

118,378 acres

16. E. Walford, *The County Families of the United Kingdom* (1860), lists 25 Cardiganshire families. The 1864 edition of Burke's *County Families* lists 46.
17. For John Lloyd Davies see *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* and Benjamin Williams (Gwynionydd), *Enwogion Ceredigion* (1869), pp. 35-6.
18. Aspects of the social life of Aberystwyth in the early part of the century have been described by W. J. Lewis, *ante*, 1959 and 1960.
19. Thus, at Aberystwyth, Bridge Street was regarded as the centre of the working-class district. See *Aberystwyth Observer*, 5 January 1867.
20. Population Returns, PRO, HO 107, RG9/4198.
21. It would be tedious to multiply examples of these attitudes ; students of the periodical literature of those years will be familiar with them ; almost any issue, for example, of the *Baner* in election years will furnish examples.
22. *Yr Athraw*. Cylchgrawn Misol dan olygiaeth y Parch. William Thomas, M.A., September 1865, prints an article on 'Bugeiliaid Sir Aberteifi'. Beneath the romantic, lyrical view of the writer (presumably the editor) are the realities of a hard, cruel life for the children of the small farmers, of poverty too great to admit the effective exploitation of the elementary means of education provided by the chapels.
23. *Aberystwyth Observer*, 29 June 1867. This judgment should be compared with the section on Aberystwyth in the Municipal Corporations Report of 1835.
24. The most revealing and reliable account is to be found in a letter of John Matthews, referred to above, to his son John Matthews, of Amlwch, dated 22 July 1865, in NLW MS. 8321. This should be compared with Richard's own account in *Baner*, 19 July 1865. For the rôle of the Liberation Society in these affairs see, in general, my article 'The Liberation Society and Welsh Politics, 1844-1868,' *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1961), and the Minute Book of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee under 29 June, 3, 4, 6, and 8 July 1865. The report of this committee to the Executive Committee on 21 July makes it clear that Richard's decision to retire was made on the advice of people present at the Aberaeron meeting (see Liberation Society Minute Books, IV, L.C.C., A/Lib/3, Minute 563). The Minute Book of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee is L.C.C. A/Lib/13.

25. Mr. Matthews was embarrassed because Henry Richard's agents were at that moment in the front parlour discussing Richard's prospects. The unexpected newcomers were shown into the back parlour, and so the two rival parties were kept separate. See letter cited above in NLW MS. 8321.
26. It would be interesting to know how many of these were Cardiganshire men and how many Irish.
27. David Williams, 'The Census of Religious Worship of 1851 in Cardiganshire,' *ante*, IV, Number 2 (1961). See also I. G. Jones, 'The Elections of 1865 and 1868,' *op. cit.*, pp. 45-9 and 67-8.
28. The Independents appear to have believed that the northern part of the county had been lost to their denomination by the activities of Mr. Thomas Gray, the successor to the famous Philip Pugh, whose Methodistical tendencies and connections had been such as to discourage the subsequent attempts early in the century of Azariah Shadrach to re-establish the churches in the region of Llwynpiod, Blaenpennal, and Lledrod. 'Yr ydym', wrote the historians of the Independent churches, 'yn teimlo fod yn bur annaturiol fod yr hen enwad a gymerodd y meddiant cyntaf o'r wlad hono wedi ei gau allan yn llwyr o honi . . . trwy anffyddlondeb un a aeth yno i'w wasanaethu'. T. Rees and J. Thomas, *Hanes Eglwysi Annibynol Cymru*, IV (1875), p. 210.
29. One correspondent made much of the fact that Davies engaged the Reverend T. C. Edwards, son of Dr. Lewis Edwards of Bala, to preach to his workmen—'y navvies beiddgar ac anystyriol sydd wrth y cannoedd yn ei wasanaethu'—presumably in vacation time. *Baner*, 12 July 1865.
30. For a survey of this see my article 'The Liberation Society and Welsh Politics', *op. cit.*
31. This information is based on the Secretary's Cash Book for the years 1844-6 (L.C.C. A/Lib/89), and thereafter on the published annual *Reports*.
32. *Baner*, 19 July 1865.
33. The quotation is taken from the letters of John Matthews, *op. cit.* On Capel-y-Drindod see Evan Davies, *Hanes Plwyf Llangunllo* (Llandysul, 1905), pp. 85-6.
34. For Bwlch-y-Groes Chapel see Rees and Thomas, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 206.
35. Referring to the visit of Richard's agents on the business of the election, John Matthews wrote, 'I did not know what to do, as the Methodists at Aberystwyth were placed in a very awkward predicament. Our old chapel the Tabernacle is erected on Lease on the Col.s land ; this lease is now approaching its termination and we have been in correspondence with the Col. for a renewal of the lease intending immediately on obtaining that renewal to commence renovating the old Tab. and spending some thousand pounds or more in so doing. The Col. has promised us the renewal of the lease ; but owing to some difficulties arising from the settlement of the Nanteos property the thing had not been completed. Under the circumstances I was crippled. I could not promise to take any active part in the business without consulting the friends lest I should compromise the matter and bring myself into trouble with the brethren.' John Matthews to his son, 22 July 1865, NLW MS. 8321.
36. 'From time immemorial there has been one (i.e., a church rate) in that parish, proposed almost always by the Churchwarden, who has acted in that capacity for nearly forty years. He is an "Independent" in religion, and the principal persons who have attended the vestry (for the purpose of making a rate) belong to the same denomination, and when I asked them if they really wished for it their reply was they did not desire to alter the "*hen gwstwm*". However, within the last two years some murmurs have arisen against the rate, and I this year wrote to the vestry recommending its abandonment.' Copy of a

- letter of Sir Thomas Lloyd (in Kilsby's hand), in Ivon Letters, NLW MS. 3291, Folder 21.
37. *Baner*, 19 July 1865.
 38. Davies's Address to the Cardiganshire electors, *Baner*, 2 August 1865.
 39. For Cobden's letters to Richard, 1849-65, see Cobden Papers, Vols. XI-XIII, BM Add. MSS. 43657-9.
 40. Kilsby to John Jones, 21 November 1865, Ivon Letters, NLW MS. 3291. *Baner*, 14 June 1865, prints the pre-election manifesto of the South Wales Committee of the Liberation Society, meeting at Aberdare the previous May.
 41. For some of Davies's gifts, see the letter of John Matthews to his son already cited.
 42. *Ibid.*
 43. *Aberystwyth Observer*, 24 August 1865. For a review of Morley's gifts to Welsh causes, see the interesting paper by Henry Richard in Edwin Hodder, *The Life of Samuel Morley* (1887), pp. 294-301.
 44. See Liberation Society Minute Books, L.C.C. A/Lib/3, Minute 598 (27 October 1865), *et seq.*, and *ibid.*, Minute 774, where he is paid £7.15.6 expenses for carrying out the registration (19 October 1866).
 45. Kilsby to John Jones, 21 November 1865, Ivon Letters, *op cit.* There is an interesting reference to the National Freehold Land Society in a letter of Cobden to Henry Richard, 20 August 1852, in the Cobden Papers cited above, which suggests that Richard, as secretary of the Peace Society, was interested in this method of political organization. Richard was one of the Londoners whom Kilsby consulted.
 46. I have seen only one reference to this, in *Baner*, 26 July 1865.
 47. Based on the Ivon Letters, *op. cit.*
 48. See Thomas Nicholas, *Middle and High Class Schools, and University Education for Wales* (1853), and *The Welshman*, among other newspapers, 2 September 1864, for reports of the discussion on Nicholas's paper on the same subject before the Social Science section of the National Eisteddfod at Llandudno.
 49. The newspaper scheme can be studied in the Ivon Letters, *op. cit.*
 50. *Aberystwyth Observer*, 22 August 1865. See also *Baner*, 26 July 1865.
 51. Colonel Lewes, of Llanlleir, Inglis Jones, of Derry Ormond, A. Saunders Davies, of Pentre, J. B. Harford, of Falcondale, were all mentioned, as was Howell Gwyn, of Neath, from outside the county. *The Welshman*, 12 August 1864 *passim*. It is clear from correspondence in the same newspaper in June 1865 that Trawscoed was not responding to demands that the Lisburnes should give a lead.
 52. *Ibid.*, 8 December 1865.
 53. Both voted against Gladstone's amendment on borough franchises. Both abstained from voting on Gladstone's amendment concerning the borough franchise, 12 April 1867. In a letter to the *Aberystwyth Observer*, 27 April 1867, Lloyd explained that he had done so because he was convinced that the government's proposal was more liberal than Gladstone's, and pointing out that Liberals like Dillwyn had carried their objections to the point of voting against their party.
 54. These developments can be traced in the files of *The Welshman*, *Aberystwyth Observer*, and *Baner*.
 55. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1868-9, L (424). The 1865 election cost Sir Thomas Lloyd £3,300.19.8, and David Davies £2,969.17.9. *Ibid.*, 1866, LVI (160).
 56. See, for example, Slater's *Directory* for 1868. *The Cambrian*, 11 September 1868, reprints an article from *The Mining Journal* on the crucial rôle Richards was expected to play, as an industrialist, in the economic development of Cardigan-

shire. The county's future prosperity, it pointed out, 'is bound up wholly and solely with the prosperity of their mines—if their mineral interests languish, every other department of their trade and commerce suffers, and there can be no general expansion of industrial pursuits.'

57. These movements can be traced in the letters of John Matthews, *op. cit.*, especially E. M. Richards to Matthews, 17 August 1868, David Davies to same, 1 August 1868, and Evan Davies to same, 17 August 1868. See also, for example, Richards's speech in *Aberystwyth Observer*, 22 August 1868.
58. *The Welshman*, 23 October 1868.
59. Examples of these attitudes can be found in the speeches made at the nomination meeting for the borough seat at Aberystwyth, *The Welshman*, 31 July 1868, and in letters in the correspondence columns of the newspapers, e.g., *ibid.*, 9 November 1868.
60. *Aberystwyth Observer*, 22 August 1868.
61. For Vaughan's two Addresses see *Aberystwyth Observer*, 11 July and 5 September 1868.
62. For Thomas Harries's evidence before the Hartington Commission, see Report from the Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1868-9, VIII (352), and 1870, VI (115).
63. For details of the poll see my Cymmrodorion lecture cited above, p. 65, note 57.